

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 0112

DEPT PASS TO ALL NATO CAPS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, VT, SP

SUBJ: VIEWS OF AN INFLUENTIAL CHURCHMAN

REF : MADRID A-2 OF JANUARY 8, 1976

1. THERE FOLLOWS A SUMMARY OF EMBASSY A-2 RELATING A CONVERSATION WITH MSGR. MARTIN PATINO, VICAR GENERAL OF THE MADRID/ALCALA ARCHDIOCESE. AS PRINCIPAL ADVISOR TO THE LEADER OF THE SPANISH EPISCOPATE, CARDINAL VICENTE ENRIQUE Y TARANCON, ON CHURCH/STATE MATTERS, MARTIN PATINO IS ONE OF SPAIN'S MOST INFLUENTIAL CHURCHMEN AND, EVEN THOUGH HE IS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE ROLE, POSSESSES MAJOR POLITICAL INFLUENCE.

2. ACCORDING TO MSGR. MARTIN PATINO, THE SPANISH EPISCOPATE FULLY SUPPORTS DEMOCRATIZATION OF SPAIN, AS EVOKED IN THE KING'S INAUGURAL MESSAGE OF NOVEMBER 22, BUT IS AGAINST THE "RUPTURE" THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF THE OPPOSITION HAVE CALLED FOR. COMMUNISM, OF COURSE, REMAINS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE ROMAN CATHOLIC FAITH. THE EPISCOPATE VIEWS THE NEW GOVT FAVORABLY, PARTICULARLY FONMIN AREILZA AND JUSTICE MINISTER GARRIGUES. HE NOTED DISTURBING RUMORS THAT FRAGA'S PLANS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION WERE ENCOUNTERING ROAD BLOCKS IN THE CABINET AND EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT SOME OF THE KING'S

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MORE CONSERVATIVE ADVISORS, PARTICULARLY CORTES PRESIDENT

FERNANDEZ MIRANDA, MAY BE SEEKING TO ISOLATE THE KING FROM MORE LIBERAL ADVISORS SUCH AS PUIG DE LA BELLACASA AND AREILZA.

3. HE SAID THE SPANISH CHURCH, AT A SPECIAL PLENARY OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE IN LATE JANUARY , WILL SEEK TO "PUT ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER" BRINGING UNDER CONTROL THE ACTIVITIES OF ULTRA LEFT CLERGY WHO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SEEM TO HAVE A CONFUSED UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH'S POSITION ON COMMUNISM. MSGR. PATINO ANALYZED THE BREAKDOWN IN POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN THE CLERGY IN TERMS OF THE MADRID DIOCESE WHICH HE THOUGHT REPRESENTATIVE WITH 4,000 PRIESTS. PERHAPS 200 WERE ULTRA LEFTISTS, ANOTHER 600 ULTRA CONSERVATIVE. THE REMINING VAST MAJORITY FAVORED LIBERALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY BUT ALSO THE MODERATE AND EVOLUTIONARY POLICIES OF CARDINAL TARANCON AND THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE.

4. MSGR. MARTIN PATINO CONFIRMED THE STORY, WIDELY HEARD HERE, THAT HE HAD BEEN THE PRINCIPAL AUTHOR OF CARDINAL TARANCON'S SOMEWHAT CONTROVERSIAL HOMILY READ AT THE SPECIAL MASS FOR THE KING ON NOVEMBER 27. NOW THAT SOME TIME HAD PASSED, HE JUDGED THE HOMILY HAD RECEIVED GENERAL SUPPORT ALTHOUGH IT HAD BEEN CRITICIZED ON THE RIGHT AND ON THE LEFT. AS A COURTESY, MSGR. MARTIN PATINO HAD ARRANGED FOR THE KING TO SEE THE FINAL DRAFT AND THE KING HAD SENT BACK WORD HE LIKED THE HOMILY.

5. HE BELIEVED CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS, LONG STALLED UNDER FRANCO, WOULD NOW IMPROVE DRAMATICALLY WITH THE NEGOTIATION OF PARTIAL ACCORDS THAT WOULD IN EFFECT REVISE THE OUTDATED CONCORDAT. THE GO'S HE THINGS, WILL DROP ITS INSISTENCE ON RETAINING ITS VETO POWER OVER THE DESIGNATION OF BISHOPS, IN RETURN FOR WHICH THE CHURCH WILL GIVE UP ITS VARIOUS SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND RENOUNCE GOVT SUBSIDIES, LEADING EVENTUALLY TO DISESTABLISHMENT, A DESIRE OF BOTH THE SPANISH EPISCOPATE AND THE VATICAN. A FIRST TANGIBLE STEP TOWARD STRAIGHTENING OUT CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS WILL BE AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE OF THE DESIGNATION OF NEW BISHOPS TO FILL EIGHT LONG-VACANT SEES.
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6. DURING THE CONVERSATION EMBOFF REITERATED WELL-KNOWN U.S. POSITION IN SUPPORT OF GRADUAL EVOLUTION TOWARD DEMOCRACY.
EATON

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ALL NATO CAPS.

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